

# Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci from Human Stools in the Community

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Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) infections continue to be an emerging public health problem. VRE transmission has been documented in the hospital setting. However, there are little data on VRE carriage in the community setting in the United States.

From July 1998 through December 2001, 10-20 stool specimens per month were obtained from healthy volunteers or outpatients with diarrhea in five states (Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, and Oregon). Samples were cultured onto enterococcal media containing 10 µg/ml of vancomycin. A single isolate from each plate was sent to CDC for speciation and susceptibility testing to vancomycin using E-test.

2019 stool specimens were cultured; 18 (1%) stool specimens yielded VRE. VRE were isolated from participants in four states. Of the speciated VRE isolates, 7 were *E. faecium*, 1 was *E. faecalis*, and 1 was *E. pseudoavium*.

Further studies are underway to characterize the molecular mechanism of vancomycin resistance among these isolates and to better determine how these patients, who did not report a recent history of hospitalization, acquired VRE carriage.